

Department of Beaches and Harbors
Presentation to the
L.A. County Commission on Disabilities
November 18 2015
1:30 p.m.
Summary

Presenters:

Stefan Popescu, Executive Assistant
Carol Baker, Chief, Community and Marketing Services Division
Cesar Espinosa, Planning Specialist

1. Introductions.
2. Stefan Popescu presented Department's Vision Mission and Motto and discussed Department's Strategic Plan Goals emphasizing Goal-A (Access).
 - **VISION** - To preserve and enhance Los Angeles County's beaches and marina as premier destinations for current and future generations.
 - **MISSION** - The Department of Beaches and Harbors is dedicated to caring for Los Angeles County's coastline and Marina del Rey.
 - **MOTTO** - Caring for Your Coast

Goal A – ACCESS: Enhance access to all our beaches and the Marina for recreational purposes.

Objectives:

- Ensure that our beaches and Marina are clean, safe and in good condition.
 - Expand services, programs and events to encourage Marina and beach use by all.
 - Continue to enhance our Marina infrastructure and programs as the premier recreational boating marina in the nation.
 - Optimize parking operations.
 - Encourage multi-modal access to the Marina and our beaches.
 - Collect data on user behavior patterns and preferences to inform decisions on beach and Marina access.
3. Cesar Espinosa talked about facility accessibility with regard to parking, restrooms, accessible ramps/docks in the Marina, beach wheelchair ramps and concrete travel paths. Some facilities like the Dockweiler RV Park were highlighted for accessibility.

Cesar also highlighted some upcoming projects and refurbishments (Marina Beach and the Boathouse at Burton Chace Park) for their accessible features and ADA upgrades.

4. Carol Baker discussed the beach wheelchair program, program accessibility, public meeting accessibility and website accessibility.

The Department has 22 wheelchairs available at 15 locations and is in the process of purchasing more. Also, an agreement is in the works with concessionaires to issue beach wheelchairs to patrons with disabilities. With advance notice, the Department is able to provide a few wheelchairs at a specific location to accommodate a group of patrons with disabilities. Information is available on the Department's website.

20% of the children served by the Department's W.A.T.E.R. Program, which is geared toward inner-city children, were children with special needs. The program introduces children to water sports like kayaking and sailing. Beach wheelchairs, lift vans, and kayak back rests are used in the program to accommodate children with disabilities.

Multi-modal transportation in the Marina was discussed. The Beach Shuttle and the Marina WaterBus have accessible stops (except for the WaterBus stop at the Fisherman's Village in the Marina). The shuttles are wheelchair accessible while most of the watercrafts are not.

The Department is hosting three public Commissions/Board meetings for the Beach Commission, Small Craft Harbor Commission (SCHC) and Design Control Board (DCB Marina). The meetings are held at the Burton Chace Park in the Community Room which is ADA accessible. Assistive listening devices available upon advance request. SCHC and DCB meetings are recorded and the recordings are posted online.

Website accessibility was discussed. The Department is the first of the County departments to have an accessible website and the accessibility tool is being run monthly to verify compliance. ISD is in the process of finding a vendor to make audio files accessible Countywide.

5. Questions/Comments

President Benavides asked about how close to the water you can get from the ramp/parking lot. At some facilities is close to the water because the beach is narrow. Various devices like rubber mats are contemplated at other facilities. Generally, any kind of device or path that is placed across the sand makes it difficult to clean the sand with the industrial equipment that is utilized by the Department.

President Benavides also inquired in the possibility of implementing a drive-on Beach in L.A. County like Grover Beach in Northern California. To our knowledge, Grover Beach/Pismo is the only beach in this State where vehicles can drive to the water and it is zoned differently. The Coastal Commission's objective has been to limit development and intrusion in the coastal areas to protect the natural habitat. Any modification in the zoning would require Coastal Commission approval. Additionally, because of the difference in population density in Los Angeles County (vs Northern California) there are significant safety issues to consider.

Commissioner Neal requested that the Department expands the definition of "children with special needs" and inquired about ADA Parking ratios. She also stated that there is not enough ADA parking at Burton Chace Park in Marina del Rey. The Department follows the ADA requirements with regard to the ADA parking spaces.

President Benavides said that the ADA has been written more than 20 years ago and the population of persons with disabilities who are mobile has increased due to advanced wheelchairs and vehicles so minimum ADA parking space ratios are not enough to accommodate today's demand. He urged staff to consider adding more spaces than the minimum required. The Department will review projects on a case by case basis.